



No Child
LEFT BEHIND



south dakota
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Learning. Leadership. Service.

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No Child Left Behind

**A Glossary of South Dakota
Assessment-Related Terminology**



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A

On Jan. 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). This new law represents his education reform plan and contained the most sweeping changes to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) since it was enacted in 1965.

This new law is a blend of requirements, incentives and resources, and challenges to succeed:

- 1) sets deadlines for states to expand the scope and frequency of student testing;
- 2) requires states to revamp their accountability systems;
- 3) guarantees that every classroom is staffed by a qualified teacher;
- 4) requires states to make demonstrable progress from year to year in raising the percentage of students proficient in reading and math, and in narrowing the test-score gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students;
- 5) pushes states to rely more heavily on research-based approaches to improving school quality and student performance.

NCLB has changed the way parents and educators look at education. One goal is that all students will reach high standards. South Dakota determines this with the Dakota State Test of Educational Progress (Dakota STEP). With the enactment of NCLB, the following assessment terminology plays an important role in the education of South Dakota youth.

Academic Achievement Standards are comprised of three components: achievement levels, achievement descriptors and cut scores.

Academic Content Standards are established by the South Dakota Board of Education and specify what all students are expected to know and be able to do at each grade level in content areas determined by the state. (What students need to know.)

Accommodations are changes in the test's presentation, student response, location, timing/scheduling, and/or other attribute that are necessary to provide access for students with disabilities and limited English proficient students to participate in the test. These changes do not fundamentally alter or lower the standard or expectations of the test and do not invalidate the test.

Accountability System consists of state standards, measurement instruments, and reports of the results. Improvement activities are required for schools and districts that repeatedly fail to achieve adequate yearly progress.

Achievement Series is a Web-based assessment platform. Educators use the system to develop and administer tests using plain paper or over the Web to capture results and produce standards-based reports. The achievement series has content-neutral structure and "develop once, deliver anyway" capability.

ACT is a national college admission and placement examination. It assesses high school students' general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work.

Alternate Achievement Levels are narrative descriptors of each of the achievement levels in reading and math for alternate content standards. Alternate achievement levels in South Dakota are advancing, applying, developing, and introducing.

Alternate Assessment is an appropriate way to measure the progress of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to demonstrate progress on a general assessment and who are working primarily in the Alternate Content Standards. The South Dakota Alternate Assessment is called Dakota STEP-A.



AMO (Annual Measurable Objective) AMAO (Annual Measurable Achievement Objective) are both terms used in NCLB accountability systems. AMO is used in conjunction with Title I Part A while AMAO is used in Title III. They both are a series of objectives or the percent proficient and advanced measures that schools must meet each year to demonstrate adequate yearly progress.

Analytic Scoring A type of rubric scoring that separates the whole into categories of criteria that are examined one at a time. Student writing, for example, might be scored on the basis of grammar, organization, and clarity of ideas. Useful as a diagnostic tool. An analytic scale is useful when there are several dimensions on which the piece of work will be evaluated.

AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) is the minimum level of improvement that states, school districts, schools, and student populations must reach every year toward achieving state academic standards. Factors that determine AYP in South Dakota include reading and math targets, 95 percent test participation, attendance rate for elementary and middle school, and graduation rate for high school.

B

Benchmark A detailed description of a specific level of student performance expected of students at particular ages, grades, or development levels. Benchmarks are often represented by samples of student work. A set of benchmarks can be used as “checkpoints” to monitor progress toward meeting performance goals within and across grade levels (i.e., benchmarks for expected mathematics capabilities at Grades 3, 7, 10 graduation.)

Body of Evidence Submission of work samples that demonstrate evidence of student performance relative to specific learning standards for the Dakota Step-A.

C

CRT (Criterion-Referenced Test) is an assessment designed to compare each student’s performance to specific learning objectives or academic content standards.

Cut Scores are numerical cut points that separate performance levels. They are set on scaled scores. Cut scores for the Dakota STEP and Dakota STEP-A are determined at a standards setting workshop.

D

DACS (Dakota Assessment of Content Standards) is a voluntary online diagnostic assessment available for students in grades 2-12. It is designed to measure progress on the South Dakota content standards.

Dakota STEP (Dakota State Test of Educational Progress) is the assessment system for accountability in South Dakota schools. The Stanford 10 Abbreviated test was augmented to fully assess South Dakota content standards in reading and mathematics as required by NCLB. Dakota STEP is given at grades 3-8 and 11. Science augmentation will be added before 2007 per NCLB timelines.

Dakota STEP - A Alternate assessment for student’s whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) indicates alternate assessment is appropriate. The alternate assessment covers the subjects of reading and math based on grade level alternate content standards. Only the students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may take this test. Science will be added before 2007 per NCLB timelines.

Dakota ELP (Dakota English Language Proficiency Test) NCLB mandates that states provide an annual assessment of English language proficiency. The Dakota ELP is used as a culminating assessment administered to all English as a Second Language (ESL) students that gives academic achievement information on a student’s acquisition of English throughout the year.

Disaggregated Data are test results sorted according to subgroups of students. NCLB subgroups for accountability are ethnicity, economic status, students with disabilities, and students who are limited English proficient. Assessment data must also report scores by gender and for migrant students.

E

ELL (English Language Learners) A national origin-minority student who is limited-English-proficient. This term is often preferred over limited-English-proficient (LEP) as it highlights accomplishments rather than deficits.

ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act), which was first enacted in 1965, is the principal federal law affecting education from kindergarten through grade 12. The No Child Left Behind Act is the most recent reauthorization of the ESEA.

ESL (English as a Second Language) A program of techniques, methodology and special curriculum designed to teach ELL students English language skills, which may include listening, speaking, reading, writing, study skills, content vocabulary, and cultural orientation. ESL instruction is usually in English with little use of native language.

F

Formative Assessment (Assessment for Learning) Observations that allow one to determine the degree to which students know or are able to do a given learning task, and that identifies the part of the task that the student does not know or is unable to do. Outcomes suggest future steps for teaching and learning.

H

High Stakes Tests are tests that have “high stakes” for the student. It involves an entitlement for the student. The student is the one accountable. So, what is a high stakes test? NCLB tests-No. Exit or graduation exams-Yes. The rationale is that NCLB tests have the accountability at the school and district level, while exit or graduation exams have the accountability at the student level. (South Dakota does not have exit or graduation exams).

Holistic Method In assessment, assigning a single score based on an overall assessment of performance rather than by scoring or analyzing dimensions individually. The product is considered to be more than the sum of its parts, and so the quality of a final product or performance is evaluated rather than the process or dimension of performance. A holistic scoring rubric might combine a number of elements on a single scale. Focused holistic scoring may be used to evaluate a limited portion of a learner’s performance.

I

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA). IDEA 2004 builds on the bipartisan education reforms in the No Child Left Behind Act, and includes important reforms that will help teachers, parents, and schools ensure that every student with a disability receives a quality education.

IEP (Individualized Education Program) is a written plan of the unique educational program and related services to be provided for each student determined to be eligible for special education services.

IPT (IDEA Proficiency Test) One of two tests used by schools in the state of South Dakota to determine students placement as Limited English Proficient. Assessments that are designed to determine initial placement and re-designation of LEP students.

L

LAS-Oral and LAS Reading/Writing The Language Assessment Scales (LAS) are one of two tests used by schools in the state of South Dakota to determine student placement as Limited English Proficient (LEP). It provides for identification of students for placement in language proficiency programs. LAS measures essential skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

LEA (Local Education Agency) is a school district or other public authority under supervision of the division established by state law for the purpose of providing free public education on a regional basis.

LEP (Limited English Proficient) describes students who have a limited ability in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language; whose native language is other than English; or who lives in a family or community where a language other than English is dominant.

M

Modifications are changes in a test’s presentation, student response, location, timing/scheduling, expectations, and/or other attribute that are necessary to provide access for students with disabilities and limited English proficient students to participate in the test, but which fundamentally alter or lower the standard or expectations of the test. That is, they invalidate the test and are not allowed on statewide assessments.

N

NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what American students know and can do in various subject areas. Since 1969, the National Center for Education Statistics has conducted the benchmark NAEP assessments in reading, mathematics, science, writing, United States history, geography, civics, and the arts.

NCLB (No Child Left Behind) is the most recent reauthorization of the ESEA. Its assessment provisions require that all students be tested every year in reading and math at grades three through eight and in one high school grade. Science assessments will be required by 2007-2008

NRT (Norm Referenced Test) is an assessment designed to compare student, school, district, and state performance to that of a norm group, typically a national sample representing a wide and diverse cross-section of students. The purpose of an NRT is to provide information on how well a student performs in comparison to other students.

P

Percentile A ranking scale ranging from a low of 1 to a high of 99 with 50 as the median score. A percentile rank indicates the percentage of a reference or norm group obtaining scores equal to or less than the test-taker's score. A percentile score does not refer to the percentage of questions answered correctly, it indicates the test-taker's standing relative to the norm group standard.

Performance Descriptors/Achievement Descriptors are narrative descriptors of each of the performance levels in reading, math, and science for general content standards. Performance descriptors may also be referred to as achievement descriptors.

Performance Levels in South Dakota are advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic. Performance levels are also called achievement levels.

Public School Choice allows parents to transfer their children to another public school, which could be a public charter school, if the child attends a Title I school that has not made AYP for two years or longer. In addition, the original school district may have to pay for transportation.

R

Rating Form is based on grade level alternate content standards and is completed as a component of the Dakota STEP-A.

Reading First is a national program aimed at helping students in kindergarten through grade three become successful readers.

Reliability is a way to see whether test scores are consistent (e.g. If a student takes the same test twice, his scores should be about the same.).

Rubric Some of the definitions of rubric are contradictory. In general, a rubric is a scoring guide used in subjective assessments. A rubric implies that a rule defining the criteria of an assessment system is followed in evaluation. A rubric can be an explicit description of performance characteristics corresponding to a point on a rating scale. A scoring rubric makes explicit expected qualities of performance on a rating scale or the definition of a single scoring point on a scale.

S

Scaled Scores are useful for reporting growth changes over time. The Dakota STEP scaled scores range from approximately 400-900 depending on the content area. Scaled scores should not be used to compare two different content areas, such as reading and mathematics, on the same test.

Schools in Improvement Schools that have failed to make AYP for two consecutive years are placed in improvement status. A school must make AYP for two consecutive years to be removed from school improvement.

SEA (State Education Agency) is an agency primarily responsible for supervision of a state's public elementary and secondary schools. In South Dakota, this is the Department of Education (DOE).

Section 504 is the part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which applies to persons with disabilities. Section 504 is a civil rights act that protects the civil and constitutional rights of a person with disabilities. Section 504 and special education are two separate services.

Significant Cognitive Disability This is the criteria students must meet in order to be eligible to take the Dakota STEP-A. It is not one of the 13 disability categories for special education placement.

Spectrum Harcourt Assessment, Inc. has introduced Harcourt Spectrum™, a friendly Internet portal that makes it easy for customers to order test materials, track shipments, manage enrollment and student data, and update organizational information.

Standard Accommodation is an accommodation term used with our statewide assessments. It does not invalidate the test because it does not fundamentally alter it. It levels the playing field. A standard accommodation is also called a "reasonable accommodation."

Standards-Based Assessments are assessments that are closely aligned with and measure student achievement of academic content standards and grade-level expectations.

Stanford Writing Assessment is a performance-based writing test (scored analytically) given annually each fall to South Dakota students in grades five and nine. This writing assessment provides information that can help establish an effective writing program at the school or classroom level. Results from the writing assessment are not included in school district accountability.

STAARS-W Alternate writing assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in grades five and nine.

Summative Assessment (Assessment of Learning) Evaluation at the conclusion of a unit or units of instruction or an activity or plan to determine or judge student skills and knowledge or effectiveness of a plan or activity. Outcomes are the culmination of a teaching/learning process for a unit, subject, or year of study.

T

Title I is the first section of the ESEA, and refers to programs aimed at America's most disadvantaged students. Title I Part A provides assistance to improve the teaching and learning of children in high-poverty public schools, to enable those children to meet challenging state academic content standards.

V

Validity is the extent to which a test actually measures what it is intended to measure (What is the test actually measuring?)

Web site Resources

Assessment

South Dakota Department of Education, Office of Curriculum, Technology and Assessment:
<http://doe.sd.gov/octa/>

National Center for Educational Statistics:
<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>

NCLB

No Child Left Behind Report Card:
<http://doe.sd.gov/NCLB/>

IDEA

South Dakota Department of Education, Special Education:
<http://doe.sd.gov/oess/specialed/index.asp>

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services:
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep>

ELL

South Dakota Department of Education, Title III - English Language Acquisition:
<http://doe.sd.gov/oess/title/IIIela/index.asp>

Office of English Language Acquisition:
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/index.html>

Notes